

## **Extolling the Virtues of the Kansas Small Business Development Center**

Sir:

I write to you today to give my opinion of the KSBDC, an organization that until recently was not familiar with, but now is the source of an incredible wealth of expertise and knowledge that I cannot conceive being without. Speaking from the viewpoint of a brand new, woman-owned, small business in this great State, I feel called to action and find it necessary to share my opinions of this organization with you.

At 48 years old, finding myself at the brink of a change in career direction having a desire and the will to start my own small business in the State of Kansas, I set about trying to locate resources for people such as myself; individuals who have a great deal of business experience attained from working in corporate America, but no experience whatsoever with the nuances of starting a business. You see, experience simply isn't enough. If you don't have resources that can help steer and guide you through the multitude of tasks, strategies, and tactics involved in starting your own business, you run the risk of paralysis that can completely deter you from even trying. If that were the case, small businesses would not be born, employees would not be hired, taxes would not be paid, and the economy would continue along at the sluggish pace that we have grown accustomed to in the past couple of years.

I was referred to the KSBDC by a mentor. I had crafted my business plan, and was embarking along the road to opening my business. Those of us in the position of opening the doors of a small business for the first time, though we may have great conceptual ideas, the enthusiasm and will to get things started, lack the knowledge required to make a start-up a success. I found that knowledge at the KSBDC.

I made an appointment with the KSBDC office at Johnson County Community College. Called one day and was seen the very next day. With business plan in hand, I met for the first time with my advisor, John Addessi. From the outset, the resources at the KSBDC have proven invaluable to me. While I felt that my plan was sound, it was of great comfort to me that my advisor also believed it was sound. From there we have discussed planning, web development, financial matters, marketing strategies, press releases, infinite quantities of tips and pointers regarding networking and social networking, and virtually all items in between. I have spent considerable time in their offices and have been afforded every courtesy. I have had numerous email exchanges with my advisor who has given me affirmation, insight, and opinions, all of which have been given freely, with realism and candor, but most of all, with support and encouragement. All of this translates into launching my business. In the span of 5 short weeks, with incredible assistance from this inordinately helpful organization, my small business has gone from concept to launch – and despite my commitment and drive to accomplish all that needed to be done, none of this could have been achieved without the assistance I received from the KSBDC.

Talk to anybody about the state of the economy these days and what contribution entrepreneurs will contribute to the rebirth of this Nation's economy and you will hear, resoundingly, that small business will drive economic growth over the next few years. In part, because those of us that have been affiliated with larger industry and have attained the experience necessary to consider starting our own businesses, recognize that the larger organizations, though they employ many, keep the economy going, and support our communities, are stagnating during these difficult economic times. Growth, if any is to be achieved, is going to come from a grass roots movement of innovators and entrepreneurs, hungry to achieve success, thirsty for knowledge, and willing to personally sacrifice to get this Country, and this State, not to mention their personal beliefs, back on track.

As a citizen and new business owner, I applaud you for your continued support for the KSBDC. It goes far beyond my personal experience with them; it reaches deeply into the community and provides an invaluable supply of knowledge, support and encouragement to the future business owners of the State that may well fuel the bulk of revenue growth in the next few years. Your continued funding of the KSBDC gives our entrepreneurs and start-up companies truly meaningful and necessary services as they start or grow their businesses. I, for one, could not have made this journey without them.

Sincerely yours,  
Belinda Waggoner  
hr-haven, inc.